



Bring Up Kings

Why the Ancient Method
Beats Contemporary Education

Benedick Ganzo

BRING UP KINGS: Why the Ancient Method Beats Contemporary Education

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DEDICATION

To Tim, Matt, & Issa...

I hope you get just the right education, enough for each of you to reach your fullest potential.

Proverbs 22:6.

INTRODUCTION

We all want to raise successful children. Can we trust our schools to really educate our children to grow happy and prepared for life? This book is an examination of our present school system (Grades K to 12) and what we can do as parents and teachers to raise our kids and students to become successful and productive members of society despite the lousy job that our schools are doing as a result of flawed policies being implemented. Teachers, let's be clear are also victims who are forced to carry out defective policies that are cosmetically modified year after year by administrators, some of whom have never stepped inside a classroom, costing a lot of government money and unreasonable stress on the part of the teachers and the students.

This book is written from years of experience as a father and as a public school teacher. The teacher in the Philippine public schools as in any other conventional school the world over, is compelled to adhere to a curriculum guide, prepared by administrators who have no idea what transpire in the classrooms, listing all the skills (they call competencies) in various subjects for the teacher to drill into the heads of bored students, only to be forgotten after the tests and hence no chance whatsoever for anything to be made of significance in life. What a waste of energy, finances, and time that could have been utilized for more productive activities for both students and teachers.

Aside from proposing a new philosophy of education and making suggestions on how to overhaul the present school system, the book outlines what parents and teachers should do to raise successful children in the manner of the ancients and in line with the purpose of man's existence. It would be cheaper for governments to educate children who would also be happier and more successful.

Man was created to have dominion over all creation according to the Scriptures. Today that would mean mastery in any field the individual is being moved by his own passion or inclinations (the sciences, the arts, entrepreneurship, sports, etc.). Hence the error of forcing him into subjects that don't interest him. When man was still in the garden of Eden, God intended for him to live happily by hunting and gathering. This is not in conflict with what is being taught in evolutionary science that the first humans were hunter-gatherers. Their children were educated in the hunter-gatherer ways, having dominion over the fowls of the air, or beasts in the field; hence kings or rulers over their domain. Today it would be those who are masters or experts in their fields or entrepreneurs who rule over their own companies.

The advent of agriculture and the subsequent industrialization removed man from his original purpose in the world. Those who didn't own lands were forced to work under those who had. They were suppressed from their original calling to have dominion and became servants, living by the sweat of their brows. This continued with the industrial revolution, only that labour was transferred from the fields to dark and dirty factories. The compulsory mass education that we inherited and we have today was invented to fill this demand for labour. We therefore have schools designed for creating employees or obedient servants, instead of masters or experts having dominion over the field to which they are interested in. This explains why those who have found a way to cut school in some manner became kings, not servants or employees living a hand to mouth existence.

We start to have doubts about the present school system when we notice that most children, allowing for their own nature would not want to spend a lot of time sitting in classrooms. We also note that many who hated school and its coercive strategies lived on to be the more successful individuals. The list is too long but it

includes Albert Einstein who instead of attending his classes preferred to read on his own on topics that interest him and was evaluated by a teacher as “not to amount to anything” and failed in most of his subjects, yet went on to become one of the greatest physicists who ever lived. Thomas Alva Edison, who as a child the teacher commented “too stupid to learn anything”, went on to hold over a thousand patents for his inventions. We also hear of Richard Branson who was so vocal about his hatred for formal education that he left school at 16 to build billion-dollar businesses in six different companies. There are many other individuals who, because they were left alone or found a way to escape from the restraint of our contemporary school system to pursue their own interests, succeeded in spite being labelled a failure in class. The teachers’ pets who were always getting the perfect marks went on to live ordinary lives and many even lived unhappy. John Taylor Gatto in his book *Dumbing Us Down* showed that the school system is ruining our children. We have been led to believe that the present school system is the only way to educate our children and other ways may have been tried and have failed so we accept to be correct the decision to spend a big chunk of tax money on the system of education that we have now. The truth is, according to Peter Gray in his book *Free to Learn*, other systems have been tested and have succeeded. The Sudbury Valley School is a good example. So why don’t we apply these other successful systems and save tax money and help our children lead happy and successful lives and why not discard the present broken system that is costly for the nation? That is for the policy makers to answer.

What can we do as parents and as teachers who are truly concerned about the welfare of the children and students under our care? The book hopes to provide the answers.

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Chapter 1

The Present System

While a math teacher is reading each part of the solution of a linear equation, projected on the board, all copied from the learning materials provided by the Department of Education (Department), like reading the words of a paragraph, the students are daydreaming about what they would again hear from their English teacher, during their class later that day, trying to sound like a lost American tourist in the woods. They could not yet put into words whatever they have in their minds; they can only imitate how Americans sound by listening day after day to audio recordings of Americans having conversations they cannot understand. The Department have this policy that as long as a classroom is using these high tech tools like projectors, TV, computers, etc., students are learning regardless of how those devices are being used.

A typical student day in the Philippines is 9 hours for Grades K to 12-a total of 13 years of basic education. For 7 hours each day they will study 7 subjects in Mathematics, Filipino, Science, English, Music and Arts with Physical Education, Livelihood Education, and Social Science with Values Education, without time to reflect on how those subjects relate to each other and how it could be used in their lives. This is overschooling and does not result to education at all. Just Ask any high school graduate what they have learned in high school and they will tell you about one idea or another they don't really understand and which they could have learned in an hour or two outside a classroom and in more favourable conditions. Is it not a waste of time learning it mistily in a classroom deprived of liberty for 13 years? Another problem is that teachers are required to follow a curriculum guide prepared by the Department which is just an

unrelated menu of ideas and jargons from the above-mentioned subjects. These results to the system of hiring teachers who claim to have expertise in fields which they don't possess, and lectures on a subject matter they don't understand what they are talking about but it's not a problem according to the Department as long as they adhere to the curriculum guide to the letter.

Students have no time to really dig deep into a specific subject matter that interests them, which is important for complete and thorough understanding because they have to memorize many other unrelated facts from the other subjects. The system forces the students to learn by rote, resulting to boredom throughout the whole day of their stay in school.

Because of the emphasis of the Department on mean percentage scores and other statistical data to evaluate learning we see students resorting to cheating and not caring whether they actually understand as long as they can memorize and give the correct answers demanded by their teachers to get good grades.

Teachers are naturally good with desire to help students but it is the Department which they work for who forces them to do the things that are detrimental to students through the implementation of flawed policies, requiring teachers to teach by numbers and curriculum standardization. If teachers are just given more freedom to do their jobs of helping students, education would be much better.

Schools are institutions of contradictions. Their mission written on their walls is to produce independent learners but year after year, you will hear of another school policy increasing the number of school days. Days which would have been vacation time by students or time to pursue mastery of things they are passionate about, of generations past, are now school days with truckloads of useless homeworks. Another policy comes increasing the number of years of

schooling as if humans don't learn outside the confines of the classroom. They will punish you for pursuing your own interests and mastering a craft and will make sure you will have no time for them by giving you too many assignments and projects demanded by the standard curriculum. They will tell you that mastery or genius is only for special people who were lucky to have been gifted by nature. On the contrary, Einstein knew and the work of Laszlo Polgar will tell us that everybody is a genius, we just have to find where our natural inclinations are and we have to start early in life towards the mastery of whatever it is we would like to master. This is impossible to happen in the present school which forces every child to study a general curriculum regardless of different individual interests. This system does not respect the uniqueness of each child but rather just treating each human being as a product that can be manufactured in a school factory. You will understand why schools will not produce masters or kings in their fields. There is a great danger of being ignorant about this and just allowing schools modelled after factories of old to ruin the future of your children.

They will claim to be progressive and learner-centred, yet no student ever has a say on the things they want to learn because a list comes from a central office prescribing the things to be learned inside the classroom but they will justify it by empty words such as contextualization and budget of lessons. Before they called it TG (Teacher's Guide), then as if to demonstrate progress they called it the CG (curriculum guide), and just this morning while I am writing this, I overheard from my wife's computer, she's also a public school teacher, someone from the Department talking and proudly announcing that it will now be called MELC(Most Essential Learning Competencies) and according to the speaker it is a stripped down list of only the essential skills from its predecessors, and is only for use this school year, due to the Covid19 pandemic and they will again prescribe the old list calling it by a different name for sure. I know

that if someone would honestly take a look at that list, it does not contain the most essential. It is still full of rubbish. I thought why not use the most essential only forever? Why should we be wasting our children's precious time on the not essential? I was unsure whether to laugh or cry but I know I would prefer not to be a part of this great machine destroying children's lives and would choose to run away, if I only I am not hemiplegic, and if not for the MILK of my little girl who depends on my meagre salary.

Chapter 2

Compulsory Schooling Destroyed Education

Children are naturally curious and eager to learn things if given the proper support and environment. If you want proof of children's capacity to learn a complex subject matter on their own just think about how a child acquires mastery of the language being used by the people around him, all without the prodding of a person feeding him facts or information called a teacher, in less than two years. The child may however ask from time to time and that is the natural way of learning. At the age of about six when most children start their compulsory schooling, as required by law or tradition, it seems like this capacity is automatically turned off. Go to a classroom anywhere in the world and make an honest observation and you will not find a student who is not bored or not hoping that the buzzer will sound sooner so that he can at last be free from the confines of that room. Children were being educated since humans came into this world. They needed to know a lot about their environment including the behaviour of the plants and animals they needed for survival. This task requires intensive knowledge and skill. Children enjoy learning these skills as soon as possible and they have fun doing it. This system where the learner learned a craft from a master have been going on until about the establishment of compulsory schooling where teaching became professionalized. Before this time there was no professional or licensed teacher. There were masters of certain crafts and trades like painting, writing, sculpting, musical composition, etc.(hunting-gathering in case of ancient humans). They pass their expertise to eager learners, not bored students who would rather be doing a different thing. People learn crafts to employ themselves and feed their families since humans have been around millions of years ago.

When humans took up agriculture, wealthy landowners needed hands to work in the fields. Their paid hand didn't work with them for long preferring to have the freedom of working for themselves and improving their lives making use of their own abilities and taking advantage of all the resources the earth has to offer. This problem of difficulty finding hirelings persisted up to the industrial revolution. The rich industrialists and landowners donated large sums of money to build schools under the guise of educating the poor. What really happened was that these schools were used to keep the poor subservient and to stay in their place in society so that they would become obedient employees in these dirty and stinking factories working for the rich, throughout their productive lives. This was also the time when the myth of the retirement benefit was invented. To lure them to keep working for the rich so that they could get the benefit later in life, that most of the time they don't get to enjoy anymore because they are already either dead or disabled. This is the true schooling we inherited today. Schools will not teach financial literacy or any way of monetizing their abilities lest they become competitors. Children should only learn to endure suffering, to be subservient, loyal, and to endure boring work that doesn't require thinking and what better way to do it than by demanding that they memorize plenty of rubbish to keep them away from discovering the things that would give them better lives and leave the employment life and become business owners themselves: a dangerous competitor.

To make it more palatable, school programs are modified every year to make it appear as keeping up with the times when in fact nothing has ever changed since the most primitive schools were opened and in all honesty, it has just become worse.

Schools, instead of training children to truly become masters, kings, or experts of their crafts(having dominion over all creation which was their place in the creation according to the scriptures),

have been used to preserve the strata of society. The rich and the ruling class are safe in their place in society, they can keep the lifestyle they want, with others working hard for them just hoping to someday get a better life which for thousands of years never happened. That is the promise of school. Do not ever be absent, so that we can give you good grades, then get employed, and work hard throughout your productive life, sacrificing time that you should have been with your children to teach them (and your entire family and friends) for a long time, about 40 years. Then at old age when you have no more use to your rich employer, get your retirement benefit, a meager amount(but we have convinced you to believe it was a lot in exchange for 30 years of your life),then die. What a waste of a life but schools will keep telling their students that the children are our future and we train them here.

Since humans have been on this planet and children were being born, the way for a very long time was this. Educate yourself. Learn a craft and study it from a master or expert who has come before you. Use that education to live a happy life with your loved ones. Everybody has the potential to be a king or master (having dominion over something. In early humans it would have been mastery of the craft of hunting-gathering . Then after some time, humans invented the various arts and crafts, and having dominion after that, already included mastery of these crafts. The ancient way of true education therefore is no other than mastery of a specific craft and using it to survive. Mastery of directly gathering food to be eaten, in order to live later on became mastery of creating something, a piece of music, a book, a painting, or any product, etc which one could sell and earn from and therefore survive or flourish. This is the kind of education that the more successful individuals now, have. Hence many of them didn't like school, having found out its destructive effect.

Chapter 3

Self-Determinate Education

Children were being educated effectively to prepare them for life since humans stepped upon the earth. Hunting and gathering involved a complex set of skills that must be learned to be successful at it and our ancestors learned these activities the natural way; they were not confined to a dark cave starting age six for the next twelve years. They learned to do skillful work that required extensive knowledge and expertise; not laborious, neither mundane, unlike the kind of work they had when they decided to take up agriculture, which required carrying buckets of water on their backs and other laborious tasks not requiring expertise. With the passage of time they needed to learn new skills as demanded by their way of life. Still they used the effective and natural way to learn these new skills.

This natural way of learning is effective and this is what humans have relied upon since the dawn of humanity up to the time of the classical masters in the various fields like Galileo, Newton, Leonardo, Mozart, Shakespeare, etc. It did not require deprivation of liberty by confining little children into classrooms from age six for the next twelve years of their life, the very artificial and undemocratic system which we have at present. During the time of the mentioned masters, education was already starting to shift into the unnatural or compulsive way, similar to our contemporary schooling systems of today, but they were able to escape from its detrimental effect by choosing to study on their own or with a true master of the field they wanted to learn, rather than inside a classroom that restricts their freedom and with no one to really teach them about the things that are relevant.

Leonardo da Vinci's fortunate circumstance of not being schooled to dumbness for example was due to his being an illegitimate son at that time, barring him from schools. Leonardo was mostly left to himself, roaming around his village near Florence and sketching everything around him that he finds interesting. This went on until he was about fourteen years old, by which time he was apprenticed to Andrea del Verrocchio, a shop owner in Florence producing art and engineering works and a master craftsman himself, who noticed the young boy's ability. It was at this shop, with the guidance of a master, without any knowledge of teaching methods, that expertise was passed on and improved upon by a student. Afterwards, the student started producing his own masterpieces and the rest they say was history. Your guess is as good as mine as to what would have happened if Leonardo enrolled into one of the schools of his time which is not unlike the schools we have today.

For lack of a better term I would like to call this ancient way of learning naturally which is well-adopted for us humans as Self-Determinate Education (SDE). Aside from explaining through these pages what it is, I would also be explaining what it is not so that it would be clear why the contemporary schooling systems we have today are destroying our children in the pretext of educating them.

Self-Determinate Education is one where the child knows and is interested in the things that he wants to learn, and he wants to learn the things that he knows he needs to study in order to gain mastery or expertise of the things he wants to be doing in his life. This happens without any compulsion because the child will want to learn the things he's interested in and a child is naturally inclined to the things he might have a natural gift or what we might call talent although it might not be observable yet by others. The child is free to do the things he wants to do and he knows what he should be doing to make progress in his education. Our present schooling system is very undemocratic even in countries that are proud to call

themselves democracies. Schools are the only institutions where a person(a little human being), is deprived of liberty without a trial. He is obliged to sit in a room for 8 hours every day for 12 years of his life and he cannot do the things he wants to do without the permission of the adult in that room. He must also learn the things chosen by others for him even if those things have no relevance whatsoever in his choice of profession, his interests, or his primal inclinations. It is obvious that a child gains mastery of a craft only if he is interested in it and he is only interested in things that he is competent doing, his interests, or we may call it his passion or primal inclinations. The teacher's job first and foremost is to help the child discover those interests and to guide him in his education and never ever to force him into things that are not within the interests of the child. The teacher should therefore be a master in the field where a child is interested in, or he cannot give proper guidance. This system requires the correspondence(proper pairing) of student and teacher(again the teacher is a master or expert of a field not of teaching methods as the case is today). Teaching is truly an art in this system and he cannot do it by blindly following a procedural list given by a central office as if one size fits all in education. If he is not an expert in the field that the child wants to pursue, the teacher must introduce the child to another with the proper expertise in the field who can then help the child. This is the only way to get away with teachers who are forced by the system, not by themselves, to pretend mastery of crafts they don't have any clue about. They would be exposed and it would be obvious that the system is full of pretenders and that everybody just hides behind a veil of institution not guaranteeing nor being held responsible for whatever is happening to students or as what is always happening today, putting all the blame on teachers, who are actually also victims of the system. We have teachers being blamed for the lack of classrooms and proper equipment in the schools. Go to any public school today and you will find teachers forced to teach subjects they don't even

understand what comes out of their mouths, just reading verbatim from a curriculum guide or learners manual sent by a central office to be followed like a machine that executes precisely what it is programmed to do without questioning whether it makes any sense for fear of being found to have deviated from the prescribed algorithm by an effective mechanism of foot soldiers called administrators or supervisors whose task is to ensure that everybody is doing business along these lists called teaching guides. No wonder a child comes out of class more confused than enlightened..

At a very early age, a child knows very clearly where his interests are and training in those areas should start early on to gain mastery in those fields as soon as possible. Laszlo Polgar proved that mastery in any field even up to genius level(which is actually possible and quite common) could be attained by starting training early in life. The present schooling system instead prevents mastery in a field by delaying the proper training simply by forcing into the heads of little children plenty of irrelevant and unconnected facts or ideas resulting to confusion. Have you ever wondered why during school, children doesn't know what to do with their lives even up to the time that they must already choose a course to pursue in college or university after the 12 years of confusing schooling? Contemporary schooling system is the culprit. By the time they choose a field in college it is already too late to gain mastery. Those who succeeded in spite of the damaging schooling system are those who followed their own path with the guidance of a master(a good teacher or parent who knows the way) and very early on, even before college or university, had already been into the things that interest them, studying and mastering those things, even at the expense of their schooling grades because they were always out of class to study the things that truly matters.

It is not progressive education which teaches one too many things and places emphasis on self-direction, yet did not move away

from standardization. You see, educating a human being and standardization are incompatible. Humans are each a unique creation with special ability endowed by nature. It makes no sense to mould them into standard ones in a factory called schools.

Self-Determinate Education is also not self-directed education proposed by many school reformers because the former acknowledges the great role of the mentor or teacher who knows more about the discipline than his apprentice, only that the learner has a say in what things should be learned about by showing what his interests are which is respected by the mentor and considered in choosing how to conduct the learning process so that mastery can be attained as efficiently as possible.

Chapter 4

Artist: Teacher

Teaching is an art. In the Philippines, every teacher who gets their license from the government would proudly make that claim. After studying for a few years and passing a licensure exam, many would seek a teaching post in one of the public schools out of their love of children and desiring to somehow contribute to the building of the future through the education of the young. It is their noble calling.

Once in service, their eyes would be opened to the myriad of problems facing the Department, from lack of classrooms, books, and teaching equipment, to lack of teachers, caused by corruption but more on the implementation of unsound policies, where teachers are relegated to the task of just blindly following a guide given by the central office even if it doesn't apply to the localities where the students and teachers are, but they will again raise the defense of contextualization which is more of a lip service because teachers are required to stick to a guide or a manual. That is aside from the fact that many of the listed lessons or competencies are not given much thought or consideration as to sequence and student readiness. A case for example is in one of the mathematics curriculum guides where a lesson on the determination of the vertex of a parabola comes before the students understand what a parabola is, what its graph looks like and how quadratic equations are manipulated or written in different forms, or solved. They also have these books they call learner's material that are filled with entertaining graphics but lack proper presentation of mathematical ideas or principles.

If we want to keep teaching as an art , and make teachers truly responsible for their work, and at the same time make the government save more on education with better results, all we need to do is to look at the past and understand how humans were being educated since we set foot upon the earth. In that system teachers must be a master of his craft , not on teaching methods because methods are meaningless without something to be transmitted from the teacher to student. We would all agree that a student would learn from a master craftsman doing his craft (or an expert doing his work), just by observing him, without the latter even uttering a single word. There should be no general curriculum from a central office and there should be no standardized testing so that teachers can teach according to the particular need and interests of each student so that by the transmission of expertise every ordinary human being is transformed into a masterpiece(an expert or master of a specific field), making teaching truly an art. Teachers should also be given the power to certify that a student is ready for college or university regardless of age because he has already trained and prepared him for such work and in this way teachers would become more responsible for the result of their work with the student because it is them personally certifying. There would also be no more need of plenty of classrooms because segregation by age and grade would be eliminated. Students would just congregate on the teacher whom they wish to learn a craft from, without compulsion or prodding. A teacher would only need a little room to consult with each individual student approaching him and he is free to do his own work and to study to keep up with the advances in his field so that he can transmit these to his students. Once satisfied with the student's ability, the teacher can certify him as ready for a more advanced education or training like college or university, or he can give the student more training or education as needed. More on how this could be done in the public schools in the next chapters. There are plenty of how to teach books, focusing on methods and just short of

instructing teachers how to correctly open their mouths or how to stand just to keep the students' attention but these books fail to realize that it is not the teachers who are causing problems, because if you randomly go to any school you will find that most teachers are dedicated and has the desire to help her students, even sacrificing herself and her family in the process. In reality, the problems are caused by the bad policies of the Department which are more damaging than helpful to the teachers' work.

If teachers are just given more freedom to do their jobs of moulding a student in his field of expertise, education today would be much better. There would be no more need of standardized testing. Only the best would go to the teaching profession, unlike today, where most of the rejects of the other departments of the university or the weakest among siblings are advised to pursue teaching, for lack of a better choice. If this happens, the hiring would also be easier because the Department knows that only the best students would pursue education and once hired there would be no more need to be watching every move the teacher makes because the fact alone that he wanted to pursue teaching means he wants to do the good thing and there would be less need for administrators and supervisors, which would be a big savings for the government. There would also be no more bored students in our schools.

As a teacher practicing the art, you should know that school grades are not determinant of future success or even true individual ability simply because one can get good grades simply by giving the teacher the correct answer that she wants every time and most of the students who do this are those who cannot think out of the box, those who resort to rote memorization without understanding the lesson, and are only concerned about grades, not real learning, and may even be willing to cheat just to get the grades they want. Therefore, teachers should not focus too much on grades or the other statistics demanded by the Department as proof of learning,

which are instead dangerous to students. Instead of studying to learn, it teaches students that studying are for tests only and schools go a long way annually to prepare for this examination, that they would do anything even just short of cheating with the consent of everyone, just to make the statistics look good. We should see why standardized testing and grades should already be scrapped from our schools.

Art is defined to be a human activity that involves the creation of something relevant or valuable from something ordinary. Could Leonardo have produced a masterpiece if a patron had given him a list and demanded that he do his work by following it? We would doubt it. In order to keep teaching an art ,therefore, we should allow teachers more freedom to produce masterpieces(individuals who have found their calling and acquired expertise) from ordinary individuals. How will they do it? We can entrust it to them.That is why it is an art. We did not ask Leonardo how he did the Mona Lisa, listed it down, and told the others to do the same.

The US Army is a prime example of thorough planning before any operation is done. They found out however that many plans become useless or obsolete just a few minutes into the operation due to unexpected changes in the battlefield or moves by the enemy. Detailed planning was a waste of precious resources including time in the kind of work that they do. So they resorted to passing the Commander's Intent, which is a brief statement of the purpose of the mission and the desired end state or description of what constitutes a successful mission, instead of a detailed plan, so that the personnel concerned can make all the necessary adjustments and make decisions responsive and applicable to the variations in the battlefield conditions, yet still accomplishing the mission or the desired end. The same can be applied to education. It has no other intent but to help the child develop and reach his fullest potential .If it can be done without coercion, without segregation by age, or

without being forced to sit in class, so be it. It would be better for everybody. Micromanaging stifles the work of the teacher.

Chapter 5

Inclined to Where His Talent Lies

There is this force deep within each of us that gravitates us toward certain activities or crafts that give us joy or contentment. We might also know that we have the capacity to do these things better than anybody else. It is unique to each individual and it is as real as the force that pulls us to the center of the earth. We yield to the influence of this force as a child and we are happy.

As we grow older, amid the pressures of life and the emergence of other forces acting on us, this force somehow gets cancelled, losing its influence in our lives. This force exists to guide the individual to his true purpose or we might say his true calling in life. This force is guiding him to develop the potential or talent that nature has endowed him so that he can accomplish his purpose. Yield to this force and you will find happiness and success but go against it and you will be lost. This is why people jump from one vocation to another chasing money and fame yet still feel emptiness after getting those things. They are not living their true purpose and it is manifested in their depression and other feelings of emptiness in their lives

The function of our schools therefore, in bringing out the best in each individual is to keep this force active for as long as possible and not get it cancelled by drilling into their heads from childhood terabytes of unconnected and irrelevant facts hoping that one of it would somehow be useful someday. These results to confusion and you will remember that in school, the things that before was crystal clear to you had somehow become muddied.

Once the child starts school, the task of the teacher from the very beginning is not to fill his head with things that are meaningless to him, Rather, her task is to help the child discover and keep his interests, which we know lies his potential too. Once this interest is discovered,he child must be paired with a teacher who really understands the interests of the child so that the child can receive proper guidance to attain expertise with whatever it is that he wants to do in life.This should be done without prodding or coercion and the teacher should wait for as long as possible until the child shows where his interest or talent lies.

Albert Einstein must have known this idea, obviously he disliked schooling , and received bad grades in languages only because his interests were in mathematics and the physical sciences, when he said “We are all geniuses. But if you evaluate a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.” Einstein was lucky enough to discover his real potential, develop it, and succeed in life in spite of the ignorant teachers who labelled him as unfit just because he has no interest in the subjects that they were forcing him to pay attention to.

Can you imagine what would have happened if instead of spending his time punching bags or mastering his power punch Manny Pacquiao spent more time on the piano? How about Michael Jackson punching bags and lifting weights? They would have been wasting their lives. How many Einsteins, Pacquaios, and Jacksons do we have more who have not been so lucky? They are those who have not found their true calling and have lived mediocre and unhappy lives. The schooling system today is to blame for this because by forcing into children activities and crafts not suited for each individual according to what nature has intended him to accomplish, schools are causing confusion and are taking them away from the path where they could have accomplished great things through their true potential and could have expressed their uniqueness.

The teacher's most important task is to help the child discover where he is being driven by his inclinations because that is where his potential is. A child may have many interests too and the teacher must in no way stop him from pursuing those varied interests too. The point here is that each individual must be allowed to pursue his own interests, and get guidance from those who have come before to develop those interests whatever they may be and not be forced into things not suited for them. Because of the absence of this important principle in our schooling systems today, we are asking fishes to climb trees, bulls to fly, and birds to breathe underwater, then label them stupid for failing to do it and those who can as genius. Each of us is a genius in a certain field but our schools are dumbing us down according to John Taylor Gatto.

A child for example may show interest in writing or other literary works. If each day he goes to school instead of learning how to develop his own writing style or technique the teacher would be asking him to solve pages of algebraic equations, do you think he would become a great mathematician? I doubt it. He would also have wasted a good career in writing. This is why our present schools are destroying our children.

Chapter 6

Schools Can Never Replace Home & Family

It is in the home where the child first shows his interests. This is why parents play a more important role in the education of the child and schools can never replace the parents. They should only support the child in pursuing his interests. If the child shows interest in music for example, they should understand that the child's activities should involve things related to music like learning music theory early on from a real musician. Unless he shows interest in other things aside from music, which is fine, putting him away from his musical pursuits even if you call them educational matters as what schools today do is a waste of the child's precious gift. You will be confusing him or you will be forcing him to live a fake life away from what nature intends him to accomplish. Forcing children into things chosen by other people for them will bore them to destruction. When they fake interest, it is usually only for the grades that the adults deceived them to be all-important, not for the mastery of any craft or field of human activity.

While our schools still operate in the same manner they do today, parents should enroll the child in one that would support the growth and development of his interests, and not to push him into countless other things he has no interest in. Those other things, including reading and the basic literacies, can wait for a little while and learn only those that may be useful in his musical pursuits. He might need to read a few words for example so that he can read the lyrics of a song if he desires to understand songwriting for example. This is something related to his interest in music. Learning should go along the interests of the child only and subject matters should be tackled only in an "as-the-need-arises" basis. Like the learning to

read if he wants to know about lyrics. Not just reading for its own sake and without the need or especially the interest of the child. Learning things can wait for as long as possible until the child asks or the need to learn arises in order to continue towards mastery of his chosen craft. This can happen by special agreement with a cooperative teacher only, as no school, except the Sudbury Valley School perhaps, as of today, yet understands that forcing into children a rigid general curriculum chosen by others for him, will not serve him well towards expertise.

Schools should not attempt to replace what the family has found out about the child and should work together with the family to develop the child's own interests This is why a general curriculum is useless. It doesn't pay respect to the uniqueness of the individual. We have already shown why it is dangerous to the development of the child..

Consider Manny Pacquiao again. What if instead of spending time in the gym and perfecting his punch he listened to his mother to continue with his schooling and spent his time studying the many subject matters required in school that has no use whatsoever in his boxing career, do you think he would have been the great boxer he is today? No way. What if his mother had been more supportive of him and said "Manny do what you want to do. I will support you in whatever it is you would like to be doing with your life"? For sure Manny would have been happier on his way to the top of the boxing world.

Pacquiao was fortunate enough to attain success in spite of the lack of parental support and was somehow able to mend his relationship with his mother after he became successful. Others who have become masters have not been as fortunate. Many have reached the height of fame and success in their chosen field because they fought for it but suffered from some form of mental illness

because parents and others around them have not been supportive enough. Let me tell you about Kurt Cobain who failed in school because he was being asked to solve plenty of algebraic equations as homeworks when his interest was only in poetry, music, and visual arts. Cobain insisted on pursuing his musical interests even without supportive parents, and was living under a bridge at various times, while performing music around Seattle. Finally, he achieved success through his music. Fame and fortune came, but along with it depression, culminating in suicide at a young age of twenty-seven, while at the peak of his music career. We see similar life patterns among the youth of today who have become unhappy because they were not allowed to pursue their interests, even if they gain worldly success in a different field which seldom happens. Many people succeed in their fields because they love what they are doing. They can spend hours mastering it without ever getting tired; because they are driven by their very being to accomplish their purpose in life. Albert Einstein knew this and in a letter to his eldest son Hans Albert, said, "do the things that you love, even at the expense of school. It is the way to learn the most. When you are doing something with such enjoyment that you don't notice that the time passes." Parents need to be supportive of whatever their children are interested in because it is nature telling them what they really are supposed to accomplish in life. Considering the very different world that we live in today, we now have many fields of human activity that were inexistent before. There is no more need to force children into similar patterns of activity decades ago. We should let them discover their own calling in life and educate them along those interests. If schools at present would only understand this, we would be having more successful kids and immediately many of the problems of education we are experiencing today would magically vanish away.

Since humans roamed the earth, when a child needs to learn something he asks from someone who knows how to do it and he

learns. Children can roam around with their parents and they learn many things naturally and according to their own needs. They learn from someone who knows the subject matter, not from someone who knows how to teach. The natural way suited for humans was replaced with something artificial, including the greetings in chorus before the classroom starts its business, and the sounding of bells to mark the start and the end of each session. This artificial way of learning started with the invention of the compulsory mass schooling that we have inherited today and we know historically that its purpose was not really towards mastery but rather just to fill the demand for labour that no one wants to be doing . Schools should never replace the home and family and teachers should support the child's interests which he started manifesting at home instead of causing confusion by forcing into him a menu of irrelevant ideas or facts that doesn't serve his goals and needs. Teachers and parents have important roles to play in the lives of children, and they can work together for the development of the child, without a central office spitting out annoying commands.

At home, the parents must support the child in pursuing his interests. There is a tendency that at school, because teachers are obliged to follow a prescribed standard curriculum, the child may not be able to pursue his own passions because there are things chosen by others for him to attend to. This is okay as long as the child is also interested in those other learning areas. It should never be forced to him if he doesn't want it, let alone be graded incompetent just because he is bored. It is a common problem in school and of course it is expected because the child is not doing the thing that motivates him from the inside.

So whatever education has been started in the home according to the inclinations of the child, the school must not attempt to replace it with a new standard curriculum, to learn many other things that do not have in any way any relation to his interests. The other things

that are important in any profession or field like reading or arithmetic, he will learn those things in his own time without the need of prodding or coercion, if in the meantime he is just allowed to first gain mastery of the things that he is interested in. This is self-determinate education which has been going on for millions of years compared to the failed and costly system of today which has only been going on for more or less 200 years. This present educational system is bound to fail because it fails to consider the uniqueness of each human being by its emphasis on standardization, when in fact since the dawn of humanity, education was personalized. There is no standard human being, each is a unique individual, that has never been before and never will be again in the future. When this coercive schooling was invented, no one wanted to go there and that is why they made it compulsory by law, taking advantage of the political influence of the factory owners who are in need of labor force from obedient and uncreative individuals who have been dumbed down by the schools to just blindly follow orders, made to believe that it is their only place in society and it is good for them, while the rich (mostly factory and farm owners) would be unthreatened in their place in society while wealth keeps coming in from the sweat of the human machines made according to standards from these schools. To keep the operation of these schools cheap, and produce the desired workforce, and to prevent one talented individual from pursuing his own interests which might one day be a competitor in business, they implemented standardization, a general curriculum for everybody that would effectively dumb them down. Today the reason why we have schools may have changed already but whatever that reason is, the full development of every human being would not happen if we still have the same schools that we have today, patterned after school factories of old producing standardly dumbed down individuals.

Chapter 7

Spend Less: A Fiscal Solution for Modern Governments

The Constitution of the Philippines mandates that education should take a big chunk of the country's annual budget. Despite the millions being poured into the Department, it seems like it is not still getting anywhere near enough. The Department, as in all others around the world, is still plagued with problems on how to effectively educate the young. They think that by pouring in more money and by implementing new policies year after year, more standardization, more testing, more school days, less free time, more homework, we would be having more competent children, developed into their fullest potential, happy, and ready for the future. They are all wrong.

The only way to solve the present learning problems and to educate our children better, reducing government spending at the same time, because there is so much waste of money in education, as proven by the work of Bryan Caplan in his book *A Case Against Education*, is to look at the ancients on how expertise was transmitted from one generation to another and scrap the schooling system we have inherited today from the last two hundred years when governments thought that educated human beings can be manufactured in the same manner as goods are manufactured from factories, without respect to the uniqueness of each individual.

By applying the principles of self-determinate education, the system which worked for humans since they set foot on earth up to the invention of the present schooling system, all of our present education problems would magically disappear. In other words, and to repeat what we have been explaining, the present schooling

system is the cause of our education problems by dumbing down our children and preventing the development of their fullest potential.

The present school system cannot be reformed by introducing new policies year after year and spending more money on them but rather by going back to the way on how we educated human beings before there were schools that functioned as factories producing a certain product. Hence today's schools have a common curriculum for every child in a very narrow field of human ability. Because of this we are teaching our children the wrong stuff. Instead of segregating children according to age, our schools should let them group together according to interests which is what actually happen in society. People do not form groups in the market for example or in any other place according to age but they will group together according to their common interests thereby passing knowledge and expertise within that group. We can do the same in our schools and students will have a chance to learn from each other and the expert teacher in whatever field they are interested in may also be consulted by the students, if they so desire. In that way schools may not anymore need plenty of classrooms and there should be no more forced learning on unnecessary subject matters and there would be no more need of bells signalling the start and end of the learning process because learning will be continuous even outside of schools because students will be interested in mastering the things they are drawn into anywhere they are and for them life is learning at the same time. Teachers will finally be doing their job of producing better human beings by allowing each child to pursue their passion and interests and guiding them to become masters in whatever field they might be interested in.

If this can be done there will be no more bored students because each child will be doing the things they are passionate about. We believe that no two human beings are alike so why not let them express their own uniqueness by allowing them to develop

their own abilities, which are so diverse and our present schools only cover a very narrow spectrum of that, using a standardized curriculum designed to produce obedient factory workers who do not want to think for themselves but who will just do whatever is commanded of them.

The solution to improve education is therefore not more money, more schooling, and more standardization, but rather less of those things and teaching just the right stuff according to each individual's needs and inclinations. Education is such a basic necessity that no one lives without it but the need of one is not the same as the need of another. Just like eating, another of the most basic of human needs, one doesn't care what another eats for breakfast or how much of it but he would want to eat what he chooses and in an amount dictated by his physiological need in order to survive. Would you like to eat every day the same foods eaten by others and chosen by a committee of menu experts for you? You will not unless you are very sick and plan to be dependent for the rest of your life. It is what we do to our children in the name of education, we are treating them as sick, no wonder they end up knowing not what to do with their lives other than to go with the crowd and follow the instructions given to them without thinking.

I am not saying that following instructions is bad but that is not the trait that we need in modern society. It only worked for factory workers and labourers that are needed to run efficient factories. Today we need people who can think out of the box and can solve problems in a creative way. We should let each child discover and make use of their abilities by helping them develop it as early as possible through the proper coordination of the family, the school, and each individual child. Sir Ken Robinson proposed that to reform schools we need to move away from more standardization and as a consequence make standardized testing unnecessary, allowing governments to save millions annually by scrapping those useless

tests. Knowing that each child is unique and according to Howard Gardner there are multiple intelligences, it makes no sense to create a standard curriculum for everybody. This was done only in the last two hundred years because they wrongly believed that each child can be educated in the same manner as goods are produced in factories and for efficiency and to reduce costs, they needed just a single curriculum for everybody. Anyway the resulting products they wanted to produce are no other than obedient and resilient factory workers also who did not need to use their special talents to create useful things but just obedient factory workers who would follow instructions given to them without thinking and who would endure the hardships of boring and dehumanizing factory life.

Chapter 8

Education: An Infinite Game

Professor James P. Carse in his book *Finite and Infinite Games* defined finite versus infinite games and explained how different fields of human activity can be classified as one or the other. Finite games are those where players follow a set of rules and the game has an end where a player or a team is declared the winner while another as the loser according to a set of predefined and fixed rules. In a finite game there is always a winner and a loser. Golf, basketball, chess, etc. are finite games. Infinite games are those where there is no need to declare a winner and the game continuous indefinitely, others can join the game at any time, the objective being to continue playing. Others may also quit the game at any time while the rest continue playing, without a winner or loser being declared. Business for example can be thought of as an infinite game. There are no fixed rules except the law of the land where the business is established, and even those laws vary from one country to another. No one is declared the winner or loser because there is no end and anybody can join the game at any time. Life is also an infinite game. In the millions of years that we have been around, no one was crowned the winner of life. We just go on with our lives to live happily and meaningfully. Those who live their lives beating each other and trying to be the winner will be the most unhappy. The proper treatment of different human activities will ensure favourable outcomes for the individual.

Education should be treated as an infinite game. We just continue to learn and there is no end of it. There is no winner in

education. We should try to learn the things that we need in order to reach our fullest potential. We do not need to learn everything let alone be graded as a failure on some of it. If a child is passionate about visual arts, he can develop his abilities on making more of that art and someday earn a living from it. A teacher can guide him to be able to do this and the earlier he starts developing his ability in that area the better he would become. Would it not be a waste of his time and then his life if somebody forces him from age six to eighteen to spend most of his time solving right triangles over and over again? This is the problem of our present education. We are forcing our children to learn the wrong stuff and also we are forcing our teachers to teach the wrong stuff and become mindless manual readers instead of allowing them to practice the art of teaching and produce masterpieces, the children who have found and developed their talents to the fullest.

There is no winner or loser in education. That is why the self-determinate education system frowns upon a numerical grading system as if learning is a competition. It is not. Learning is a basic human need that we will try to satisfy that need without somebody forcing it to into us, let alone be measured at it. Just like eating, would it be necessary that somebody be declared the biggest eater at the end of the day? Or the earliest eater? Or be given a card each year that says you have eaten 500 kg of rice and only 190 kg of pork? Would you call it better nutrition?

Standardized testing, grading, segregation by age, standard curriculum, and homework, should have no place in a modern school. Life should be learning at the same time and it should not be confined only to schools. It should happen anywhere as life goes on. If children are made to understand this very early in life, there will be no more need of homework because children will, by themselves, be trying to learn many things as they are driven by their own interests anywhere they are without the prodding from adults or compulsion.

Another remnant of the factory model in our education system is when we hear parents, with good intentions, telling their children to study hard and follow instructions and get good grades so that you can get a good job where you are going to be more obedient and a great follower of another who will be giving you orders. This is why when we go back to the history of our school systems we will know that the establishment of the first schools were sponsored by these factories and would you believe it was out of honest philanthropy or more of a business calculation? They sponsored schools because they were having difficulty hiring factory workers because many would not allow trading their freedom for a small amount of wage. They found out that the best way to produce this kind of workers is to train them in schools, teaching them very little aside from blind obedience and fooling them into trading their freedom for a little wage and security at work that they do not really need. There were better opportunities outside of these factories but they were duped by these schools into believing that there were none. This deception continues up to today but the advent of technology is making it harder and harder everyday to hide the truth.

The best advice we can give our children is to get a good education, not schooling, so that they will learn how to create something new (art, invention, or a new theory) or solve the big problems using their own talents. Hence the need of developing each individual's fullest potential in line with his own unique abilities. Each of us has our own unique ability and we must try to find what that is very early in life so that we can make use of those abilities as soon as possible. Again, we do not need to learn everything. Only the things that we love or have the ability to do.

Consider a shark. Teach it how to hunt in the forest for 12 years and give it a test every now and then on how well it can do the job, the shark will fail. Now consider a lion. Train it to hunt in the ocean for the same amount of time, and give it a test It will also not

pass of course. We know that both are great hunters if placed in their proper places, but both were failures according to the tests we gave them. We need to do the same for human beings. We have a broad range of human abilities and the present curriculum in schools only addresses a tiny portion of that broad range. We might be training some sharks to hunt in the forest or to climb trees. What a waste of time and resources. A child must therefore be given enough time, with the assistance of teachers, to find their proper place first and only then start the training towards mastery in wherever nature wanted them to be, as the ancients did before we established our first schools. This is how we solve all the problems of education without pouring in more tax money into the system.

Chapter 9

Enlightened Parents & Teachers

Parents and teachers should work together to ensure that the child gets all the assistance needed on his journey towards the mastery of his craft, chosen by himself according to his natural abilities and inclination. They should not allow school work to interfere with it. By now we should know how this can happen in a school with a rigid curriculum. Interference might happen this way. A child for example is interested and has special aptitude for mathematics and physics. Giving him plenty of assignments every day to memorize poems he doesn't care about would not be educating him. It will interfere with his development or his education in the field that he is passionate about, mathematics and physics in this example but it can be music, painting, dance, writing, or any other field of human activity . As our world advances, children would have more to choose from, that were unavailable to people of the past. So the more we should help them discover where nature wants them to be by giving them, early in life, the freedom they need to pursue their interests. This is actually what happened to Albert Einstein, the great physicist we all know about. His interest was in understanding how nature works, so naturally he would also be drawn to the related subjects of mathematics and physics, but his teachers were forcing him into the study of languages and when he failed in these subjects because he was bored his teachers remarked that he would not amount to anything. He was lucky to have survived from such interference and that is why we know him today. Many other victims of such schooling methods were not as lucky. They have been confused and bored that their passion for something died out and

they did not master anything. Einstein therefore made a conclusion late in life that educators of today should learn from. He said, "The only thing that interfered with my learning is my schooling". Every parent and teacher should understand that a child is naturally drawn to activities that would manifest his natural abilities. Education starts by discovering this as early as possible. This is the most important part of education. It is not about getting a copy of a list of competencies or skills to be spoon fed by force on bored children and talk about motivation, motivation, motivation, which didn't work ever since Terrell Bell promoted it in the early twentieth century. It is a waste of time in today's world and it might have worked only in the past when education was only a façade for cheaply producing obedient factory workers. We don't need to talk about motivation anymore if we just give children the freedom to go wherever their interests or natural ability drives them, they would automatically be motivated to learn and master their chosen craft without even mentioning motivation in talks about education.

To illustrate the point, let me tell you about Mozart. No, not Wolfgang but Leopold. Do you know him? He was a composer and teacher, and yes the father of the former. One day, while giving piano lessons to his daughter Maria Anna, he found himself answering questions from the younger and four-year old Wolfgang Amadeus who was curious about what they were doing and how the little boy's eyes lit up upon hearing a new melody, the father and daughter were practicing. To Leopold this was a clear sign of interest. He was obliged to give the little boy a lesson and for the next few days the boy was studying the piano by himself, and for some other times had to be dragged away from the piano because he just wouldn't leave it, not even for sleep. By five, the boy was already composing his own music. Who wants empty talk about motivation? Just allow a child to follow or be driven by his own interests and he will do everything to satisfy his curiosities. If Leopold forced on

Wolfgang the study of Agriculture, or any other subject chosen by a committee or by himself for the boy in the name of education, do you think we would have a great agriculturist in our history books with the name of Mozart? I don't think so. It would be like believing that you can train a lion to hunt well in the ocean or training Shaquille O'Neal to be a great horse jockey or believing that you can train someone who stands barely five feet to be a great basketball player. It would be working against nature.

Parents and teachers should understand that education is not about producing a standard product, as defined and specified by a central committee, or an individual who has received a piece of paper called a diploma and can blindly follow orders, and has passed the different factory levels called school grade levels, or has joined a ritual where they march in rhythm to a song and had written their names on a list. We should redefine education to be the process of respecting the uniqueness of each individual and giving him the opportunity to develop his natural abilities or inclination, through the guidance of a mentor, so that he could reach a certain level of mastery, to do something useful for himself and his fellow human beings.

Long before the discovery of Howard Gardner of multiple intelligences, it was obvious that each human being is unique. Parents and teachers, therefore, should as soon as possible help the child discover what nature wanted him to do with his life. Teachers, especially, should not distract him from his path towards mastery by forcing into him a rigid curriculum which has no connection to his interests or calling in life. This can happen when teachers teach by numbers as required by a central Department of Education. If teachers themselves are to serve as mentors, each one of them must be a master of a certain field, which expertise they can pass on to their pupils.

This is why self-determinate education is not self-directed education because the former knows the importance of a teacher whom the student can look up to in order to gain mastery of whatever craft or field of human activity he is interested in. The teacher serves to shorten the path towards mastery or kingship in a specific field whatever that might be. It should be made as short as possible in order to save time because life is short and it would be in the best interest of the individual, and of humanity as a whole, if he could maximize the use of his life by making his original work or contributions in the field he chooses to work on as soon as possible.

Chapter 10

Homeschooling & Unschooling as Options

As long as schools operate as they do today, and the teacher can not cooperate with the child because she is forced to follow the orders from a central office to teach by numbers, parents have no other option but to resort to homeschooling and unschooling, to protect their children and to allow them to develop into the best version of themselves ready for life by getting the best education they could possibly have by allowing them to pursue their own interests and to go deeper towards mastery of whatever they would like to master, which would never happen in schools because of the too many unnecessary subjects being tackled shallowly and forcing children to memorize without understanding or to learn by rote.

Homeschooling is one where children get their education from home or in some other place outside of schools with the assistance of their parents or some other person acting as teachers or facilitators who follow the prescribed curriculum mandated by the Department. Unschooling is a form of homeschooling but the only difference is that unschoolers have more freedom to pursue their interests because they do not follow the Department's prescribed curriculum to pursue the things they need to master their chosen craft or discipline.

If parents can find cooperative teachers who will understand that the children have more important things to do with their time instead of being forced to memorize crap from a list the school calls MELC for Most Essential Learning Competencies, which is totally crap, then parents can let their children join school for the good things it can offer, like socialization with friends, but never to allow it to restrain the child from pursuing his own interests by giving him plenty of useless school work. The school system has a way of punishing students who cannot be held back from pursuing their own interests and mastering a craft or being a genius, master, or king at something according to Einstein, by giving him failing grades in subjects the child has no interest in and then shaming him by calling him stupid and a failure in school, only to succeed in life. They are the Einsteins, Edisons, Kurt Cobains, Leonardo da Vincis, Manny Pacquiao, Kobe Bryants, Richard Bransons, Bill Gateses, the list goes on. This is why school is very dangerous and those who succeed at it never master a craft or do not succeed in life, unless you call taking orders obediently, and receiving a piece of paper called a diploma, a success. The masters mentioned above have found a way to break free of the shackles of school, to pursue their interests according to the talents nature has endowed them,, but many students who were potential kings and masters of their discipline or craft were not as fortunate to escape and were restrained and made average by schools.

Almost every year in the name of improvement in education, the Department revises its list of competencies as if the outcome of education depends on it through the teachers in the field who blindly drill it into the heads of bored student from age six to eighteen. What a waste of time and lives for both teachers and students! Just recently they had a new name MELC for it and congratulated themselves that they have improved education because it already contains the most important skills that a child should learn to be

called educated and to succeed in life. They are fond of answering the never ending question, “should we include this or that?”. Every year they question each and every item included in the list and introduces new ones but for many decades they never seem to have gotten the point. They ask, “should we include algebra or the solution of quadratic equations?”. They ask such questions over and over again and every time they arrive at an answer, whether yes or no,, which answer changes every year depending on the weather or their mood during a meeting, they proudly publicize that they have finally solved the problem of education for good, only to reverse policy again the next year and another millions of money going to waste. We should understand that the answer to such questions in connection with the preparation of a general curriculum for every child is pointless. The reason is because for a child who will be pursuing a career in the sciences or engineering it is very important and basic that it would be impossible for him to understand the more advanced mathematical and scientific concepts, needed to do his work, without it, but for someone who will be pursuing a career in creative writing or any other craft not requiring more advanced mathematics than arithmetic or the ability to count, it would be a waste of his time and resources, which would have been better utilized in the study of the language, for example, that he would be using to do his writing.

A cooperative and good teacher will not allow the destructive tendencies of schools to prevail but will find a way to let the child develop and pursue mastery of his chosen craft in many ways. He should not be too strict with school attendance and work on some school subjects irrelevant for the child considering that the child may need to absent himself from class from time to time to work on more relevant activities .A child for instance who is interested in science may need to go to the library more often or may need to perform experiments instead of attending class. A cooperative teacher should

understand this and should not fail him in gymnastics or in any other subjects as a punishment or give him too many assignments in subjects the student has no interest in. Whether homeschooled, unschooled, or attending regular school with a cooperative teacher, the child should have a mentor who is a master of the same craft he wishes to master himself. If the child is interested in music for example, he should have an accomplished musician, as a mentor very early in life, to learn from. Parents, teachers, and adults, should assist the child in finding one. A child who is interested in computers may get a mentor who can teach him programming, applications, and web development as soon as possible. While learning all these different crafts for each child, they will also learn the basic literacies and it will be in the context of their interests, eliminating boredom and making motivational strategies moot and unnecessary. No motivational strategy has ever worked anyway in spite of all the hype, just to get more budget for the never-ending seminars. Just go to a school any time of the day and observe a classroom for 10 minutes and you will see that 80% of the class is doing something unrelated to what the teacher is talking about, and even the teacher is bored from reading or going through a list provided by the central office and cannot wait to get away from the teaching manual as soon as possible. This is natural because the topic is boring and unrelated to their individual interests. We just have to provide schools with teachers who have expertise in certain disciplines for students to go to and we would have no need of administrators and principals anymore because students and their mentors can manage themselves better. It will be much cheaper to operate public schools. More on what a reformed school should be like in the next chapter but until we see such a reform, bringing up masters could only be done through homeschooling or unschooling or through compromise with a cooperative teacher in a regular school.

Chapter 11

Teaching How to Learn & What Schools Should Be

Had John Dewey prevailed in influencing how schools should operate we would have vastly different schools today. John Dewey advocated that schools should not look too artificial but should be modelled after the natural environment where children grow and learn about many things in life. The most important and maybe the only skill that needs to be taught is to learn how to learn because the rest of that needs to be learned by the child to gain mastery of his craft consequently follows. Children have this natural ability at birth and that is why in just a few years, without being taught, children learn many things needed for survival including the acquisition of complex language used by the adults around him. From an early age he also shows interest in some activities. After a few years in a place called school, the child loses all these. The child who since birth seem to have an effective internal guidance system to know what to do to understand the world and prepare for the challenges of life is now lost, without any direction, just waiting to be told what to do, and accept as true and good whatever is offered to him. This is not how humans thrived since our first ancestors roamed this world. We are being dumbed down by schools as John Taylor Gatto states it. This can be prevented if adults around can help the child explore and study the craft that interests him. With enlightened adults around,

the child would surely grow up to be a master of his craft, sooner than anybody would expect.

All the child needs is a mentor who is a master of the craft he is interested in and the removal of all the distractions that is deflecting him away from his interests or natural aptitude. Today, the road to mastery is a very long and narrow road that close to zero lucky ones ever get to the end. They end up being mediocre graduates who know little about the irrelevant things and nothing about the relevant ones as a result of a rigid general curriculum unsuited for the each child's unique abilities. Instead, we expect schools to adhere to the following principles:

1. Schools are places where students congregate according to interest. It is very unnatural to group students according to age and move them to the next grade level as if uniform products being manufactured in a factory. Instead, schools should be places where masters will serve as teachers or mentors to those students who are interested or inclined to learn the same craft each of them have expertise in. Each master will only teach those interested to learn their craft, they will not force it on every child. This is why schools operating as they are today are very undemocratic, forcing each child to memorize garbage he has no interest in and prevented instead to have the time and freedom to explore those he finds interesting, yet proudly claiming to promote democratic principles. Schools indeed are establishments of contradictions. The Department proudly claims that it is their mission to produce independent and lifelong learners, and they will post it anywhere to be seen by everybody as if what is stated there magically happens once pasted in as many places as possible, yet when they talk it is as if after a decade of schooling students can't still be trusted to learn on their own. As I write this, the world is suffering due to

quarantines and social distancing protocols brought by the Covid19 pandemic. It troubles them so much that they cannot open the schools and conduct face- to-face classes. I, on the other hand, am elated by the sudden turn of events that my children will be having more time to pursue their interests, except that my two older boys seem to have already forgotten about what their interests and aptitudes are. Of the two, the one who has been a consistent honour student, following school instructions and doing everything the school require students to do to get good grades and be honoured for doing so is more lost than the other. One having been in school for nine years already and the other six but I hope that my daughter, the youngest child, will get educated differently but I still haven't succeeded in convincing my wife, herself an obedient and conventional schoolteacher, about it. If I could get my way by force, or if I could get my conventional wife to understand, I hope that my daughter never sets foot inside a classroom. Modular distance learning for now is okay because it would not have as much of the restraining and impairing power of the classrooms.

2. Teachers are free to do their craft at any time while in school. Students learn from someone doing their work without the need of listening to a lecture. Teachers are artists who can turn human beings into the best version of themselves through the transmission of knowledge or expertise. As artists they should have the freedom to do their craft at any time in school for those gathering around him to observe him working on his craft, ask and get tips or learn from him. He doesn't need to speak unless someone asks. We should free teachers from being manual readers and automatic transmitters of whatever nonsense a central

office wishes to be delivered to curious little human beings, causing them to get distracted and lose focus on their calling in life. Once a student has learned everything or more than what the master knows, he can , go to university or get higher education or move to another master through the recommendation of the former or immediately get out of school to deal with real life using the education he got from school. Education is not about getting grades, pieces of papers with ribbons, or graduation, but about getting prepared to live life doing what the person is inclined to do with it.

3. Teachers are hired to stay in or out of school to demonstrate mastery of their craft and willingness to share that mastery. Teachers should be hired to demonstrate mastery of their craft around students who are interested to learn the same and to be willing to share his mastery to them. Interest in his craft is indicated by gathering around him and asking questions or explanations. There is no more need of administrators because there is no rigid general instruction from a central office to be blindly followed by everyone in school, and this would result in savings from the salaries of useless administrators and school heads. Administrators and supervisors are for factories, not schools where masters and learners interact and pass expertise from one to another. Masters and their apprentices may interact with each other in the spirit of freedom and respect for one another. Basic literacies will be tackled as the need arises so that some aspect of the craft to be mastered should be learned. Students are intrinsically motivated because they will understand that learning it is required for him to master the craft he has chosen or has interest in. There will be no bored student in

school. Instead of schools giving diplomas to graduates, the power of recommendation for a student to get higher education or get jobs should rest on the teachers the students got their training from. This is why there is no need for a centralized control or a general curriculum as long as teachers are masters of their craft, proven by their work. When we finally leave the factory-modelled schools, we will also leave the practice of evaluating individuals by their grades or the pieces of paper they carry around. Instead, the credentials of an individual is their work. Instead of staying too long in school to please their teachers and get high grades and be labelled a graduate by carrying a piece of paper, students would want to learn as everything as quickly as possible according to their preferences to leave school and immediately face real life and start working with the real thing using their God given abilities and the freedom to choose what they want to be doing.

4. Students attend school in order to leave as soon as possible. Students go to school not to stay but to leave as soon as possible by learning the craft from the master as quickly as they can, according to their needs. There is no need for grades and standardized tests because the individual learner will try to get as much education he needs about his chosen craft to be ready to deal with real life. There is no need of rituals or ceremonies to mark the start and end of his education but as soon as he considers himself capable of doing his craft and earning a living from it he will immediately leave school to do the real thing. The measure of success of schools is the number of individuals who left school to live an independent and productive life. The sooner it can be and the less time spent in school the better. This would reduce greatly the expenses of running

schools and at the same time produce better individuals. We don't need more schooling and more money spent on useless rituals and ceremonies like tests. We would do better with less but we need to be teaching the right stuff respecting human differences or uniqueness in ability. We shouldn't be wasting our time and money teaching fishes to climb trees and making their lives miserable. We have to accept what they are and let them live their lives happily swimming in places where nature intended them to be. Who says they needed to climb trees? A child for example who loves music will go to school to learn from a real musician(teacher) and fellow students interested in the same, music theory and songwriting. Then they will also learn how to use the available inexpensive technologies to record songs and how to produce, promote, and sell them. They might also learn the laws related to intellectual property, all within the context of their interests. Teaching them to solve differential equations is a waste of their time and a great danger to their lives j just as fishes trying to climb trees are dangerous. Even before they have already considered themselves to have mastered their craft they can already try it out in the real world by doing the real thing. They can already start scheduling concerts, recording their songs, selling them, and therefore learning how to earn a living from their work. The same educational pattern would work for any other discipline or line of work known to man. This is especially important because new jobs, work, or expertise are being created due to advances in technology and some of the jobs or crafts of old are no longer needed in modern society. We have no need anymore of putting a master factory worker in schools to share his expertise in blind obedience and laziness to think because that is not anymore needed in modern society,

having been replaced by the more obedient and accurate machines and robots to do the boring factory work. A child on the other hand may be interested and shows aptitude for mathematics. He goes to school to learn from a mathematician who will introduce him to every mathematics then known to man. They might start from what he could understand depending on his abilities and progress according to his own pace and interest. At school he might be learning not only from the master mathematician but also from fellow students who are also interested in mathematics. As soon as they can, depending on their interest and work ethic, they would already be inventing their own mathematics and publishing their work for the world to see. There is no need for grades and standardized tests to satisfy central offices and to justify increasing the next round of funding for more tests and more useless paperwork. School success should not be measured by mean percentage scores on irrelevant subject matters even the test giver doesn't know a thing about. Students who are interested in learning their craft knows how to test himself without somebody asking him, but master and apprentice at school may agree on themselves to have tests to measure their progress or readiness to continue with more advanced concepts but it should not come as a mandate from a central office who doesn't even have a clue what is going on. If someone for example is interested to learn carpentry, do you need to give him periodic tests on how to drive a nail for him to learn that skill? You will both be wasting your time. If he is really interested in learning the craft, he will be practicing and testing himself until he can do it properly without any prodding from someone else. The same holds true for any other human endeavour.

CONCLUSION

The people trying to solve the education problem can get a clue from Albert Einstein. The great scientist and one of the most original thinkers who ever lived experienced the same problems, being once a student himself, and proposes a solution, when he concluded that “We are all geniuses, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.”. He knew that we are teaching and testing our students the wrong stuff. We can't teach a fish to climb a tree, and it doesn't need to live a productive and happy life. He has the ocean to live a full life. Each human being has a great potential. We just need to find what it is and master it and we can forget about the rest and yet live full and happy lives. We can even be more successful through focus on our abilities or interests without the unnecessary distraction from many other things, only learning some of them as the need arises, but not necessarily in a classroom setting, saving school time for each student and therefore money for governments. Einstein experienced how distracting school was to his development as a scientist. It was keeping him away from his research. If Manny Pacquiao allowed himself to be distracted by school work instead of going to the gym and perfecting his boxing, do you think he would have been the great boxer he is today? Does it really matter whether or not he can solve algebraic equations in two unknowns for him to be considered a great human being too? We should stop wasting each other's time and money on the wrong stuff in the name of education.

Education is not about putting into a person's head the things that another person thinks should be good for him but education should be about developing one's fullest potential, and it is different for everybody. We all have our own unique abilities and education starts by finding that ability and developing it.

In the early stage of life, each of us is drawn into things that amaze us and we find happiness doing or thinking about those things. Those are really the things that nature programmed each of us to be doing in our lives, and each of us is assigned a unique task. We should not go against it just so we can be the same with everybody else. There is no standard life task for all human beings. Once we have discovered the ability that nature has endowed us so we can do what it wants us to accomplish in life, we should start developing it as soon as possible, with the guidance of a mentor, who has mastered the same craft before us. That process of learning and preparing the person for his calling in life whatever that might be should be the whole point of education. Standardization should have no part when we talk of education. It is the very reason why students are bored in school. They are confused, and just after a year of schooling in our present schools, they have already forgotten their calling and they don't know what they can do or what natural abilities they have and need to develop to become successful. It was okay then, in fact that was why we had the first schools, when the sole purpose of the enterprise was to produce unthinking, obedient, and standard factory workers, who can bear the very long hours of boring work for a very small pay. That is not the best way to live our lives in today's world unless you want to live a life simply being pushed around and taking orders and living a hand to mouth existence without having been given the chance to develop your true talents which was hidden or taken away from you by the schools you were made to believe were educating you for good.

Einstein's calling to understand the workings of nature became clear to him when he wondered, the first time he saw it as a child, the forces that was causing a compass needle to point in the same direction every time even if it is moved. Manny Pacquiao knew he would be a boxer after getting inspiration from the movies of Bruce Lee and practicing at the gym incessantly. Do you think both of them would have had the same success in a different field chosen by others for them ?No way. It would just be another waste of a great life.

Instead of being required to teach by numbers by the Department of Education, every teacher should be a master of a certain craft so that he can properly guide students who might also be pursuing mastery of the same craft. He must also develop the ability to spot talent or inclination very early in the lives of the children under his care so that mastery can be attained as early as possible through proper guidance. If his craft is different from the one the child is pursuing, he must not fake expertise, but should give the child best mentor possible in another master.

The success of education should not be measured ny a high annual mean percentage score in the different boring subject areas unrelated to a child's specific interest or the number of students who received a piece of paper called a diploma with his name on it but rather by the number of students who can already live their lives independently and doing all the things they are passionate about for their own benefit, their family, and their community.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A licensed public school teacher in a Philippine high school, Benedick Ganzo is also a licensed civil engineer, with experience working in the deserts of the Middle East, in the areas of construction and consultancy work. His experience in dealing with various nationalities while leading engineering teams gave him insight on what constitutes a great educational experience. He passed the civil engineering licensure examination on November 18 & 19, 2000, with a rating of 93.75% where the required passing is only 70%.

One time, while on vacation from work and with his children, he tried to investigate how their education was advancing, whether they were developing the required thinking ability to solve the important practical problems and to succeed in life, he was not satisfied. To investigate further, he decided to be a public school teacher himself, giving up a promising career in engineering for the sake of his children and for the entire system of education which he had already been critical about since he was a student, but this time in the perspective of a teacher hoping to make a change. There he found out that teachers and students are naturally good at providing and receiving learning but the system itself, through flawed policies, is working against it. He dug in to the history of education, works on psychology, and child development in order to find solutions but he found out that the system operates in a way that problems cannot be solved and a teacher should just accept as insoluble, all the problems he sees and just pretend nothing is wrong by just going through the checklists and following orders even if it is not working, or risk losing

his job. He wrote all his findings in this book from the perspective of a student, a father, and a public school teacher.

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